Phasing out of mercury

481. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether studies by WHO and global environmental agencies have established the neuro-toxic effects of Mercury which hampers nerve conditions and causes renal failure;

(b) while the Western countries are phasing out use of Mercury for its adverse effects, whether, India's imports of Mercury have more than doubled in six years since 1996-97;

(c) whether even Parad Shivlings, traded and installed at homes for worship, has 30 percent Mercury by weight as its key constituent; and

(d) whether Government would consider to put in a regulatory structure for phasing out the use of Mercury of which India is the largest importer in the world?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A decreasing trend has been observed in the import of mercury in India since the year 2003-04.

(c) No Conclusive data on mercury content in Parad Shivlings are available.

(d) According to the Ministry of Commerce, mercury is freely importable and no proposal for changing the import policy for mercury is under consideration.

Wildlife Crime Control Bureau

482. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the National Wildlife Board has decided to set up a Wildlife Crime Control Bureau; and

(b) if so, the constitution and precise functions of the Bureau?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) Yes, Sir.